



March 23, 2004

All Members
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As the House of Representatives prepares to consider the FY 2005 Budget Resolution, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) strongly urges you to oppose the resolution. Despite an increase over the President's Budget Request released in February, the budget resolution does not provide adequate funding for veterans' health care to meet the needs of sick and disabled veterans seeking care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system.

The House Budget Resolution provides \$1.2 billion over the President's request, only \$1.5 billion over the FY 2004 appropriated level. Last year, the Under Secretary for Health of the VA testified that the VA needs approximately 13 percent to 14 percent annually just to meet the costs of inflation and mandated salary increases. This budget does not even come close to meeting those needs.

The Independent Budget, a comprehensive budget policy document co-authored by PVA, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, recommends \$29.8 billion for veterans' health care for FY 2005. This funding request tracks the real needs of the VA to provide quality health care in a timely manner to all veterans enrolled in the system.

If passed, this resolution will only fuel efforts to deny more veterans health care and charge veterans more for the care they receive. PVA calls on you to reject this half-hearted attempt to fund veterans' health care and only support a measure that provides adequate funding. Passage of the Budget Resolution as presented would be a disservice to those men and women who have served this country and who are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Fuller
National Legislative Director

Chartered by the Congress of the United States

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